



# **Grandparent Caregiver Pilot Program: Annual Status Report for 2006**

**Government of the District of Columbia  
Child and Family Services Agency  
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## **I. Introduction**

This is the first annual report about the Grandparent Caregiver Pilot Program (GCPP) which the District established under the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Establishment Act of 2005. The Act requires an annual report that details:

- ✓ Number of applications received.
- ✓ Number of subsidies awarded.
- ✓ Number of families receiving the subsidy and TANF.
- ✓ Number of denials due to eligibility.
- ✓ Number of denials due to funding.
- ✓ Estimate of the number of eligible caregivers who have not yet applied.
- ✓ Number of subsidies terminated by the program or by the caregiver.
- ✓ Substantiated cases of fraud.
- ✓ Number of children removed from households while receiving the subsidy.
- ✓ Recommendations for program improvement.

Statistics in this report are for Calendar Year 2006.

## II. Overview and Process

The District Grandparent Caregiver Subsidy Program is one of the first of its kind in the country and we began this endeavor with almost no precedents to follow. Over the past seven months, the program has grown from a few words on paper to a living, efficient agent of change for hundreds of grandparent-headed households. This was made possible through the efforts of the Program's two staff, collaboration with the community, and the infrastructure of CFSA. To reach out to eligible grandparent caregivers, the program staff conducted numerous community work shops to educate grandparents about legal custody and services available to them. Program staff addressed support group meetings, schools, and community information fairs. To date, we have held or been a part of over a dozen workshops or information sessions.

***“This is the most wonderful thing to happen to grandparents. The workers are awesome. They deserve a medal.” – Joann W.***

One of the strongest attributes of the program is the working relationship it has with community advocates such as AARP, Children's Law Center, Family Ties, Legal Aid, Bread for the City, legal clinics at

Catholic University and the University of the District of Columbia and Emmaus Senior Services. Although we may not agree on all issues, the program has effectively fostered communication and obtained input from those advocates. As the program is developing, we place a high value on feedback and alternative points of view. We encourage you to seek their comments as well when evaluating policy recommendations regarding this program.

Participant satisfaction and need is also an area of importance to us. We have taken several steps beyond what is required by the legislation to ensure effective communication and service. We have already held one focus group consisting of caregivers enrolled in the program and plan to hold another in February to learn about their experience in the program. We have also begun mailing a bimonthly update letter to all participants to keep them up-to-date on things such as policy, payments rates and other resources that might be helpful to them.



This program is only one of six in the country. We looked at these other six state subsidy programs (Nevada, Ohio, Kentucky, New Jersey, Kansas and Louisiana) in search of best practices that might strengthen our program. The District provides by far the largest

***“I am very happy there is a program like this. I can provide them with necessities and still afford a proper living.” – Sylvia D.***

subsidy amount; Nevada provides a maximum of \$616 compared with \$927.30 in the District. Of those six states, four limit the age of child eligibility to 18. New Jersey allows the child to be as old as 19 if still attending school and Kansas allows the subsidy to last until the child is 21 provided they are enrolled fulltime in school or an accredited job training program. Four of the six states have an income requirement. The District and Ohio have the highest

income limit at 200% of the federally designated poverty level. All six states require the caregiver to have some form of legal custody<sup>1</sup>. None of the six states have the eligibility relationships as narrowly defined as our program. Most just require the caregiver to be related by “blood, marriage or adoption” within the degree of kinship required by TANF. Two states require that the caregiver be of a certain age; Kansas requires caregiver to be at least 50 years old while Nevada requires that they be within three months of their 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday.



The response from District grandparents participating in the program has been overwhelming. Aside from the obvious joy associated with being able to provide for your loved ones after years of struggling, grandparents have appreciated the personal and friendly nature in which their application has been processed. We of course adhere to all District customer service standards, but also strive to make sure that all applicants are served in an air of dignity and respect. The program manager personally sits down with every applicant, talks to them, explains the subsidy, and answers any questions they may have. We hope that this report answers all of your questions, but if there is any other information you desire we will provide it in a timely manner.

### *Process*

Processing an application is time consuming and requires a great attention to details. To fully understand this procedure it would be helpful to describe it step-by-step. The program has fielded thousands of inquiries since its inception and distributed over one thousand applications. When an interested party calls our office they are asked a few basic questions to pre-screen for eligibility. These include: Are you currently caring for your grandchild, great-grandchild, great-niece or great-nephew? Are you a resident of the District of Columbia? Has the child lived in your home for six months or more and during that time has the parent of the child lived in the home? Do you currently receive TANF or Social Security for the child? Do you have legal custody of the child? We do not ask their income level, but rather we inform them of the income limit based on their household size. If a caregiver feels as though he or she is eligible we mail them an application. Applications<sup>2</sup> are available in English and Spanish and the program has access to translation services should the need arise for other languages. If literacy or disability has made filling out the application difficult or they are in need of legal assistance to obtain legal custody, the program assists the applicant or refers them to a community agency close to their home<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Some states have different terminology for legal custody. New Jersey has a special “Kinship Legal Guardianship” that the court can award. Kansas accepts if the child has been placed with the caregiver by the local child welfare agency. Ohio approves applicants but they must demonstrate that they are working towards obtaining legal custody.

<sup>2</sup> A sample application is included in the appendix.

<sup>3</sup> In the program Fact Sheet that is widely distributed and included in the appendix of this report, we list several community partners in various parts of the city that can assist applicants. We have a close

Once an application has been submitted, all documents are reviewed to ensure they verify the applicant's eligibility. Most applications consist of at least twenty pages of documentation depending on the size of the household. Legal custody documents are read. Income and residency is verified. We establish that the applicant has a qualified relationship with the child through vital or legal records. The applicant undergoes three security checks: and FBI background check, a District Criminal History Request, and a Child Protective Register Check. All of those must also be reviewed and in some cases investigated further.

***"The Children's Law Center (CLC) is delighted by the wonderful work of the program staff responsible for managing the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program at CFSA. We hope the D.C. City Council will consider options aimed at increasing access to the program." – Judith Sandalow, CLC***

If an application is deemed incomplete a letter is sent, normally within 14 days after the initial receipt of the application. This letter lists what additional information or document is needed and notifies the applicant that they have 30 days to fulfill that request. Normally a follow-up phone call is also placed to the applicant to ensure they understand the request. If the applicant does not comply within the allotted time, the application is formally denied. If an applicant is denied we inform him or her of the decision in writing, that there may be fair hearing rights and provide the form needed to file for a fair hearing.

If an application is deemed complete, we notify the applicant in writing within 14 days that their application contains all the documentation needed for processing, except for the results of their FBI background check, which is sent directly to the Child and Family Services Agency. The time it takes to receive those results varies greatly and an application is not deemed "complete" until they are received. Once the results have been received, the program has 45 days to approve or deny an application. We are meeting this time frame in all cases.

***"By recognizing and supporting the safe, stable homes provided by so many grandparent caregivers, the program has protected children, preserved families and strengthened our community."- Matthew Fraiden, David A. Clark School of Law***

Once an application has been approved the caregiver is contact immediately via phone. If they are unavailable via phone a letter is sent informing them of the action. An appointment is then arranged for the applicant to come to the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), meet with the program manager, and sign the subsidy agreement<sup>4</sup>. *The program manager has met with and talked face-to-face with every caregiver enrolled in the program.* During this meeting the terms of the subsidy are explained and any questions the caregiver has are answered.

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relationship with these partners and most have been trained by a program staff member on the details of the application process.

<sup>4</sup> A sample subsidy agreement is included in the appendix.

### III. Program Statistics

#### *Program Execution*

The legislation creating the Grandparent Caregiver Pilot Program became effective March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Emergency rules were published on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006, and the final rules were published on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006. To ensure grandparents could receive subsidies as soon as possible, we began accepting applications on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006, and within sixty days we were approving the first applications. The first subsidy agreements were signed in April and the first checks, which covered April, were issued in May<sup>5</sup>. This means the program has been delivered on-time and is meeting the requirements set forth by the Council. As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006 we have enrolled 423 children in the program. Figure One shows the number of subsidies approved by month.

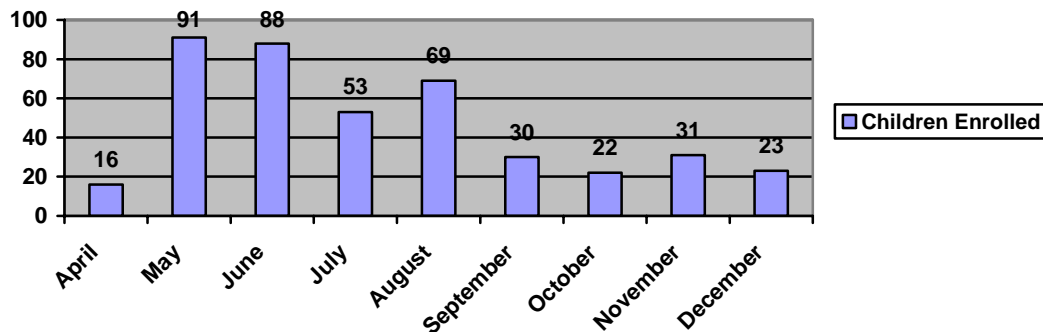


Figure One

Since its inception, the program has processed 345 applications. Of those, 252 applications have been approved, 72 have been denied and 13 are currently in process. Once approved, a caregiver can expect to receive an average daily rate of \$24.52 or \$735.60 for a 30 day month *per child*. The average annual subsidy amount per child is \$8949.80. Using these figures we can estimate that at the current funding level of \$4.5 million for the current fiscal year, minus \$200,000 for administration, the program can provide a subsidy for approximately 480 children. At the current rate at which we are receiving new applications, we expect to reach this maximum capacity sometime in March 2007. At that time we will form a waiting list and approve new subsidies as children leave the program.

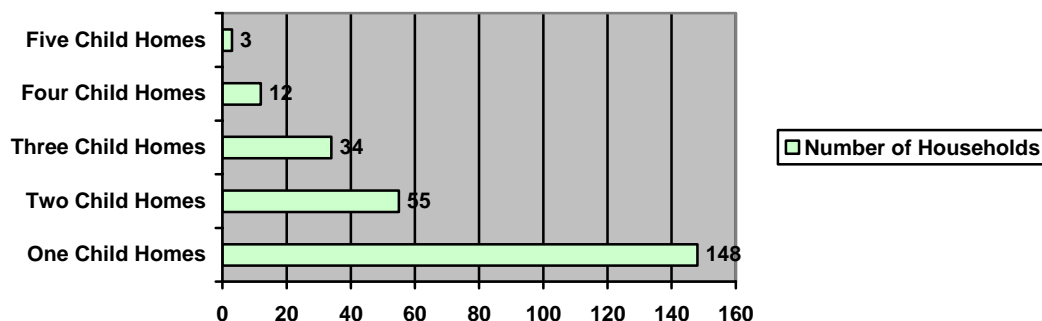
***“This program has been a big help. The staff has been supportive and understanding.” – Gwynneth R.***

<sup>5</sup> Checks are delivered via the postal service between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of each month. The program uses a daily rate similar to foster care. So when a subsidy is approved mid-month an applicant receives a partial check initially.

### *Participant Demographics*



Census data tells us that there are 5,764 children living in the District of Columbia in grandparent led households. However, we have no way of estimating how many of those children are living below 200 percent of the federally-defined poverty level. Beyond grandparent led households, there are almost 20,000 children in the District, or 17%, living in *relative-led* households. This information from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 American Community Survey shows a growing trend that reflects the important role grandparent and kinship caregivers play in the lives of children in our city. Applications to our program reveal some interesting trends. The average number of children being applied for on each application is 1.7 and the average age of the grandparent is approximately 55 years. The average age of a child in the program is eleven and a half years. Out of 423 children, 304 in the program are receiving TANF and the subsidy. Their subsidy amount is offset by the amount they receive in TANF. The 119 children not receiving TANF receive Social Security, which is not an offset. Unlike TANF rates which are based on a set scale, Social Security income varies greatly. The vast majority of children receiving Social Security receive approximately \$300-\$600<sup>6</sup>. The largest number of children approved for any one caregiver is five. Figure Two breaks down the number of children receiving the subsidy by household.



**Figure Two**

### *Terminations and Denials*

The vast majority of denials occur because an incomplete application is submitted. As previously noted, if an applicant submits an incomplete application, a letter is sent to the applicant advising what information is missing. The letter states that the applicant has 30 days to provide this information or face denial. In most cases a follow up call is also placed before the 30 day window closes. Of the 72 applicants who have been denied, 40 were denied because they submitted incomplete applications. Other reasons for denial have been income in excess of program limits (12), ineligible relationship (8), child is

<sup>6</sup> It is common for children in our program to get either survivor benefits, which are normally \$300-\$400, or a disability payment of approximately \$600.



already receiving a guardianship subsidy or foster care payment (6), the child has been adopted by the grandparent (2), the parent of the child is living in the house (1), applicant is not a District resident (1), the child is over 18 years of age (1), and the applicant does not have legal custody (1). These figures are illustrated in the Figure Three.

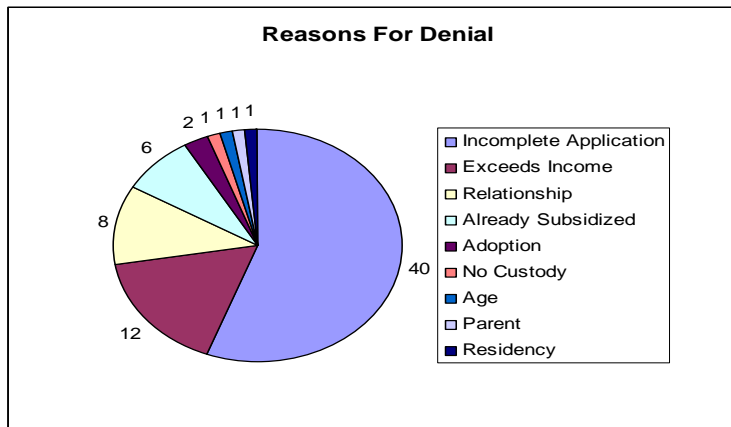


Figure Three

It is important to note that most of those denied for submitting an incomplete application did not submit a copy of their legal custody order. The reason for denial in those cases falls under the incomplete application classification and not for lack of legal custody because we can not definitively say they do not have custody. It is important to note that no applications have been

denied due to the results of an FBI background check, Metropolitan Police Department records check or Child Protective Registry check, although we have requested some applicants to provide further information to confirm that the child is not at risk based on the information in these safety checks. No applications have been denied for lack of funding.

Since we began approving subsidies, 13 have been terminated after approval. Five of those ended because the child aged out of the program. Four ended when the grandparent caregiver passed away and the children began living with another non-eligible relative. Two children left the program when they reunited with their mother and two subsidies were terminated when the grandparent caregiver became unwilling and turned the children over to CFSA. There have been no substantiated cases of fraud.

Because the statute requires that the program recertify applicants only once annually, the program has not yet recertified any caregivers. The first recertification packages will be sent out later this month. All caregivers were informed of the recertification process at the time of enrollment.

## IV. Recommendations

### *Approval Pending Custody*

From the beginning, the program has had a strong partnership with community agencies that have provided support to caregivers attempting to enroll in the program. Based on input from these partners, it soon became apparent that the most daunting task associated with the application process was filing for legal custody if the caretaker did not already have it. For many applicants, the child has already been in their care for years, if not since birth, but they never filed for full legal custody. The process of filing for legal custody can take many months. Complex cases almost certainly require the grandparent to find legal assistance and in cases where the parents must be found the process can take six months or more. This causes significant delays for a caretaker who is otherwise eligible.

***“This has helped grandparents so much. The older children need more than we can manage. I would love to see a stronger support network for grandparent caregivers in DC.” – Delephine J.***



Although CFSA still believes that legal custody is an important aspect of the program, we would like the ability to conditionally approve a subsidy for six months pending the results of a custody hearing. In order to qualify for this waiver an applicant must provide two things: a copy of a complaint for custody filed with the court within the past twelve months and proof that the child has been living in the home for at least one year (via school records, benefit statements, etc). The applicant must also meet all other eligibility requirements. If legal custody is denied after the subsidy is approved, the caregiver must inform CFSA immediately. This would allow us to get the assistance to our target demographic faster and reduce some of the burden on our caretakers.

### *Adopted Children and Minor Parents*

As noted in the reasons for denial, the program has denied some caregivers because they had adopted their grandchild at some point in the past. The caregivers are not eligible for an adoption subsidy and then because adoption legally makes the child as if he/she were “born” to the grandparent, they are no longer eligible. CFSA feels strongly that permanency for a child through adoption must be promoted. We would support a change that allowed grandparents who adopt their grandchildren to be eligible provided they are not eligible for an adoption or other subsidy<sup>7</sup>.

We have also encountered situations where grandparents are caring for not only their minor child, but the child of a teen parent, their child, as well because the teen parent was unable to provide care due to disability or enrollment in school. Because the statute

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<sup>7</sup> Adoption subsidies are only available to children adopted out of the neglect system.

prohibits the parent of the child to live in the home, those cases were denied. CFSA believes it is within the intent of the law to allow cases where a minor parent is living in the home, but is unable to care for the child due to disability or enrollment in school. This promotes long term success of the family by allowing a child to finish school and provides funds to families dealing with a disabled caregiver. Proof of disability would be required before a subsidy would be approved.

### *Subsidy Rates*



Currently the program reduces the amount of each subsidy by the amount of TANF the child is receiving. CFSA recommends the Council consider a mandated offset for any social security income, child support, or trust fund payments the child is receiving. This would allow the subsidy to serve more families without bringing the income of the child below the current program rates<sup>8</sup>. CFSA is open to discussing with its community partners the most effective way of implementing a new subsidy offset. We would also like to specify that this program is not open to caregivers who are already receiving a foster care payment or guardianship subsidy.

### *Other Considerations*

The program does not currently require applicants to provide documentation that the school-aged children they are applying for are regularly attending school. Applicants are asked to provide this during recertification. This could be an additional requirement that supports the city's effort to reduce truancy.

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<sup>8</sup> Capping the maximum dollar amount any one caregiver can receive would also allow the program to serve more children.

## V. Appendix

### *Subsidy Agreement*

#### GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA Child and Family Services Agency



#### GRANDPARENT CAREGIVERS PILOT PROGRAM SUBSIDY AGREEMENT

This Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Subsidy Agreement (Agreement) is entered into between **name** (Caregiver) and the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).

1. The subsidy provided to the Caregiver pursuant to this Agreement is to support financially the care and custody of **name** (Child), a **male or female** born on **\_\_\_\_\_**.
2. This Agreement is the sole and complete statement of the subsidy that the Caregiver shall receive from the Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program (Pilot Program) for the Child.
3. This Agreement is subject to the requirements of District of Columbia statute and regulation, including, but not limited to, D.C. Official Code § 4-251.01 - 4-251.07, and any successor legislation, and 29 DCMR, Chapter 68 (District law).
4. No payments received pursuant to this Agreement shall inure to the benefit of the Child's parent(s) but shall be solely for the benefit of the Child.
5. Provision of a subsidy under the Pilot Program is subject to the availability of funds appropriated specifically for the Grandparent Caregiver Pilot Program. Nothing in this Agreement shall be read to permit or require the payment of a subsidy under the Pilot Program if appropriate funds are not available.
6. This Agreement and the subsidy expire one (1) year from the date of signing, subject to the availability of funds. If the Caregiver seeks a continued subsidy beyond one (1) year, the Caregiver shall seek recertification as set out in this Agreement.

#### Eligibility

7. The Caregiver is eligible to receive this subsidy because:

- a. The Caregiver is the Child's grandparent, great-grandparent, great-aunt, or great-uncle;
  - b. The Caregiver was named the Child's legal custodian or standby guardian pursuant to an Order issued by the name of court on date of order;
  - c. The Child has resided with the Caregiver on a continuous basis for at least the most recent six (6) months;
  - d. Neither of the Child's parents have resided in the Caregiver's home for at least the previous six (6) months;
  - e. The Caregiver is the Child's standby guardian pursuant to a designation by the Child's parent;
  - f. The Caregiver and all adults residing in the Caregiver's home have obtained a criminal background check in accordance with District law;
  - g. The Caregiver and all adults residing in the grandparent's home have obtained a child protection register check in accordance with District law;
  - h. The Caregiver's household income is less than \_\_\_\_\_ which is under two-hundred (200) percent of the federally defined poverty level for a household with \_\_\_\_ members.
  - i. The Caregiver is a resident of the District; and
  - j. The Caregiver has applied for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits for the child through the District of Columbia Department of Human Resources, Income Maintenance Administration, and an eligibility determination has been made. It is noted that a Child receiving SSI is automatically ineligible for TANF, but may still be eligible for this program.
8. The Caregiver shall notify CFSA immediately and in writing if there is any change in circumstances that may affect eligibility as set out in ¶ 7 of this Agreement. Failure to do so may result in immediate termination of this agreement.

Subsidy Amount

9. The Caregiver shall receive a subsidy in the amount of amount of subsidy in words (amount of subsidy in numbers). This subsidy amount is no less than the regular daily rate for a Level I permanent guardianship subsidy pursuant to Title 29 DCMR, Chapter 61 for a child of this age, less any TANF benefits received for the Child (amount of TANF for Child in words (amount of TANF for Child in numbers)).

#### Review and Recertification

10. If the Caregiver seeks to have the subsidy continue beyond one (1) year, the Caregiver shall seek recertification by submitting a recertification application packet to CFSA at least sixty (60) but not more than ninety (90) days prior to the expiration of this Agreement.
11. In the recertification, the Caregiver shall establish that he or she remains eligible for the subsidy in accordance with District law.
12. CFSA shall review the subsidy and determine whether the Caregiver remains eligible for the subsidy in accordance with District law:
  - a. If the Caregiver seeks recertification;
  - b. Upon notice from the Caregiver pursuant to ¶ 8 of this Agreement; and
  - c. If CFSA has any information that indicates that the Caregiver no longer meets the eligibility criteria as set forth in ¶ 7 of this Agreement..
13. This Agreement may be modified or amended by a written addendum, signed by the Caregiver and CFSA, following a review as set forth in ¶12 of this Agreement.

#### Termination of Agreement

14. This Agreement shall terminate:
  - a. If funds specifically appropriated for the Pilot Program are not available to pay the subsidy or,
  - b. At the end of one (1) year if the Caregiver fails to reapply and be recertified for the succeeding year or,
  - c. If the Caregiver dies or,
  - d. If the Caregiver is no longer the Child's legal custodian or standby guardian or,
  - e. Upon the earlier of the Child's:
    - (1) Eighteenth (18<sup>th</sup>) birthday;

- (2) Residence outside the Caregiver's home, unless the Caregiver can demonstrate that he or she retains financial responsibility for the Child and the Child is attending a residential school or,
  - (3) Marriage or,
  - (4) Death or,
  - (5) Enlistment in the military;
  - f. If there is a substantiated finding of child abuse or neglect resulting in the child's removal from the household or,
  - g. If the Caregiver fails to submit an application for recertification pursuant to ¶ 10 of this Agreement, or fails to cooperate with CFSA in its conduct of a recertification review pursuant to ¶ 12 of this Agreement or,
  - h. If the Caregiver no longer meets the eligibility criteria set out in District law; and
  - i. Otherwise in accordance with the District law.
15. The Caregiver shall notify CFSA within two weeks of:
- a. Any circumstance that may result in the Caregiver no longer meeting the eligibility criteria set forth in ¶ 7 of this Agreement;
  - b. Any circumstance that may result in termination of the Agreement pursuant to ¶ 14 of this Agreement; and
  - c. Any change of address.

#### Appeal

16. The Caregiver's appeal rights under the Grandparent Caregiver Subsidy Pilot Program are as follows:

- a. Except as provided in ¶ 16 b of this Agreement, the Caregiver may appeal CFSA's decision in connection with eligibility for a subsidy in accordance with 29 DCMR, Chapter 59 or otherwise in accordance with law.
- b. The Caregiver may not appeal if the eligibility decision is based upon the unavailability of appropriated funds.

This Agreement represents the entire Agreement between [REDACTED] (Caregiver) and the District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency.

The Caregiver has received a copy of this Agreement.

The latest date of signing below is the date of this Agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Caregiver Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Caregiver Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Caregiver Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Hoffman, Program Manager  
Grandparent Subsidy Pilot Program  
Child and Family Services Agency of the District of Columbia

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



*Program Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions*



## Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program

The Grandparent Caregiver Pilot Program will help older people with low incomes who are raising their grandchildren, great grandchildren, great nieces, or great nephews. District residents who qualify may get money every month to help care for children living with them. Please read the following fact sheet thoroughly along with the attached "Frequently Asked Questions."

### Who will run the program?

The DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) will take applications and run the program. CFSA has a complete application package that includes the materials you need for the background checks but other organizations have the application form. There are several community organizations available to assist you in completing the application process. Those organizations are listed in the "Frequently Asked Questions".

### Is this program for me?

You must meet **ALL** these conditions.

- ☐ Your grandchild, great grandchild, great niece, and/or great nephew under age 18 lives with you.
- ☐ A court has given you legal custody or standby guardianship of the child.
- ☐ The child has lived with you for the past six months or more.
- ☐ The child's parent has not lived with you in the past six months. (This doesn't count if the parent gave you standby guardianship of the child.)
- ☐ You live in the District.
- ☐ The total of all money coming into your household is below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level (see box).

Total number of people in your home is:	Total yearly household income is less than:
2	\$26,400
3	\$33,200
4	\$40,000
5	\$46,800
6	\$53,600
7 or more	\$60,400

- ☐ You have applied for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for the child.
- ☐ All adults living in your home must submit the results for national and local criminal background checks and a Child Protection Registry check (to rule out child abuse).

### Does this program have limits?

Yes. **Getting into the program is first-come/first-served.** You can use money from this program only to care for the children you list in the application.

### How do I apply?

Call 202-442-6009 to ask for an application by mail. You can also visit our office at the address below to pick up an application. If you plan on coming to the office it is strongly recommended that you make an appointment first.

### Should I do anything now to get ready?

Yes. Take these steps before you apply.

1. Make sure you have legal custody of the child. Gather the court order that proves you have custody. If you don't have legal custody and . . .
  - You are age 60 or over, call Legal Counsel for the Elderly, 202-434-2120.
  - You are under age 60, call the Children's Law Center, 202-467-4900, extension 4.
2. Apply for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for the child. Call the DC Department of Human Services, 202-724-5506.
3. Get a criminal background check of everyone age 18 or older living in your home. Get fingerprinted at the Metropolitan Police Department, Criminal Record Checks, 300 Indiana Avenue NW, third floor, during regular business hours. Each person must show a driver's license or other government-issued identification. If you obtain the application package from CFSA, we will cover the cost of the \$35 background check for up to two adults living in the household. Applicants are responsible for the \$7 fee required to get the DC criminal records check. ***All persons 18 years or older, who are living in the household are required to get both the national and local criminal background checks.***
- 4.

### How much money can I get?

The amount you receive depends on several factors including the age of the children and the amount you currently receive from TANF. The amount is based on a daily rate so your check each month will fluctuate. On average your monthly per child amount could be anywhere between \$586 and \$895.

#### Where can I get more information?

Call 202-442-6009 during regular business hours or visit <http://cfsa.dc.gov> . If you would like to speak with someone in person, please call ahead to schedule an appointment. **IF YOU ARRIVE WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT YOUR WAIT TIME COULD BE SIGNIFICANT.**



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is legal custody?

Legal Custody is a form of guardianship that can ONLY be awarded through the court system. Without a legal custody order, signed by a judge, we will not approve your application. The only exception to this is in situations where standby guardianship has been awarded. Standby guardianship is also awarded through the court system. A power of attorney or a letter from the child's parent or the child's school do NOT award legal custody. Also, please note that we need the custody order signed by the judge, a "Complaint for Custody" document is not sufficient.

### 2. How do I get legal custody?

In order to receive legal custody it must be awarded to you in a court proceeding. You can file a "Complaint for Custody" to initiate this process. There are organizations that can help you obtain custody listed at the end of this document. Please be aware that obtaining custody can be a lengthy process depending on your circumstances.

### 3. Why do I need legal custody?

The legislation that created this program requires all subsidy recipients to have legal custody. This ensures that you have legal responsibility for the child and prevents fraud. Many of our applicants have been caring for their grandchildren since birth and have not obtained legal custody. However, legal custody is still important due to the stability it provides while maintaining some of the rights of the parents. Obtaining legal custody does NOT terminate the rights of the biological parent.

### 4. I've adopted my grandchildren. Am I still eligible?

No. When you adopt a child, that child legally becomes your child as if it were born to you. So legally, that child is no longer your grandchild and you would no longer be eligible.

**5. I'm the child's aunt, not the grandparent. Am I still qualified?**

No. You must be the child's grandparent, great-grandparent, great-aunt, or great-uncle. No other relationships are eligible. Informal relationships such as "godmother" are not eligible. You will be required to prove this in your application through legal documents, birth certificates, or the legal custody order itself.

**6. How do I prove that I am the child's grandparent?**

You prove this in your application through legal documents, birth certificates, or the legal custody order itself. Many times your legal custody order will list your relationship to the child, but sometimes it may only refer to you as the "plaintiff." If this is the case then we can establish your relationship through legal documents such as birth certificates, paternity acknowledgements, or court reports. For example, if you are the child's paternal grandparent (a parent of the child's father) you can provide a letter from the child's father acknowledging he is the father and his birth certificate showing you are his parent.

**7. What is the Child Protection Register Check and why do I need it?**

The child protection register is our database of those persons responsible for the abuse or neglect of a child. The law requires that all adults in the house fill one out so we can ensure the safety of the children in households receiving the subsidy. You are not automatically disqualified if you are listed in the registry. All cases are reviewed on an individual basis. Please fill out the register check completely, have it notarized or witnessed and provide us with the **original**. Failure to include this form or provide the original will delay your application, as we must have an original signature to process the check.

**8. Why do I need a criminal background check?**

ALL adults (anyone 18 or over) in the house must submit the results of a local criminal history check and be fingerprinted for a federal background check. This is a requirement of the program and helps to ensure a suitable environment for the children in the household being considered for a subsidy. You are not automatically disqualified because you or someone in your home has a criminal record. The CFSA reviews every case individually and takes into account the entire situation. This includes how long ago the conviction occurred, the type of conviction, and the circumstances surrounding it. It can take anywhere between 4-8 weeks before we receive the results of the fingerprint check. We have no control

over this process and cannot expedite it. Your application is not considered complete until we receive the results

**9. I've been told I cannot get TANF for the children because I get SSI. Am I still eligible?**

Yes. It is important to note that you only must APPLY for TANF. If TANF denies you because you currently receive SSI, you may still be eligible. Combine your entire household income and see the income chart on the fact sheet to see if you are eligible.

**10. Do you have a notary at your office I can use?**

No. Please note that you must have your application notarized.

**11. Can you make copies of my original documents?**

No. It is your responsibility to make copies before you arrive. We also are not responsible for returning any original documents you mail to us.

**12. I'd like to go over my application with someone before I submit it. Can someone review it for me?**

Yes. We would be happy to sit down with you and go over your application to make sure it is complete. In order to facilitate this, please call (202)442-6009 to schedule an appointment. If you drop in without an appointment and wish speak to someone your wait time could be significant.

**13. Will I continue to get TANF if I am awarded this subsidy?**

Yes. The amount you receive from this program is based on how much TANF you already receive from the District government.

**14. How long does the application process take?**

We have forty-five (45) days to process your application from day we receive all of the required documents. Please note the 45 days does not begin to run until we receive all documents, including the results of the FBI check and the legal custody order. Average processing times are significantly less though if you initially submit a complete application. Submitting an incomplete application will delay your application significantly.

**15. What happens after I am approved?**

After you are approved an appointment will be scheduled for you to visit our office so you can sign a subsidy agreement. Once you sign the subsidy agreement your case will become active and you will get a check in the mail the following month. The subsidy is NOT retroactive to the date you first submitted your application.

**16. Can I have the subsidy directly deposited into my bank account?**

No. We can only send you a check in the mail each month. On average, the check will arrive between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> of each month.

**17. Will you inform the child's parents I am receiving this subsidy?**

No. Your application and involvement in this program is confidential. Your personal information may only be released at your request.

**18. What kind of things can I pay for with this subsidy?**

You can use the money you receive from this program ONLY on things that benefit the child listed in the subsidy agreement. This includes but is not limited to: groceries, school clothes, summer camp, a portion of your rent or utilities, etc.

**Other Organizations Available to Assist You:**

**For those 60 and older**

Legal Counsel for the Elderly – (202)434-2100  
Emmaus Senior Services – (202)745-1200

**For those under 60**

Children's Law Center – (202)467-4900 ext. 4

**For those living in Anacostia or Shaw**

Bread for the City (NW) – (202)265-2400  
Bread for the City (SE) – (202)561-8587

**For those families dealing the effects of HIV/AIDS**

Family Ties Project – (202)547-3349

*Program Application*

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Child and Family Services Agency**



**APPLICATION FOR GRANDPARENT CAREGIVERS PILOT PROGRAM SUBSIDY**

- I. Applicant** - Provide the following information concerning yourself (the person who is applying for the subsidy).

1. Full name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male

2. I am the child's: \_\_\_Grandparent \_\_\_Great-parent \_\_\_ Great-aunt \_\_\_ Great-uncle

3. Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Apt.# City State Zip Code Ward

4. Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Monthly income from all sources, and the source(s) of the income:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- II. Child(ren)** Provide the following information concerning the child(ren) on whose behalf you are applying for the subsidy. Use additional sheets if necessary.

Name (last, first, middle)	Date of Birth	Sex	Social Security Number	Monthly Income	Source of Income



- III. Other individuals** Provide the following information concerning every individual other than the applicant and child(ren) who reside in the applicant's home. Use additional sheets if necessary.

Name (last, first, middle)	Date of Birth	Sex	Social Security Number	Monthly Income	Source of Income

- IV. Attachments** I (the applicant for the subsidy) have attached each of the following documents to this Application:

1. Proof that I am the child's grandparent, great-grandparent, great-aunt or great-uncle.
2. A copy (under court seal) of the court order granting me legal custody or standby guardianship of the child.
3. Either the original results of criminal background checks (each dated within 1 year of this Application) for each adult (a person who is 18 years old or older) who resides in my home *or* completed applications for a criminal background check for each adult who resides in my home.
4. Completed applications for Child Protection Register checks for each adult who resides in my home.
5. Proof that I applied for TANF benefits on behalf of the child through the District of Columbia Department of Human Services, Income Maintenance Administration.
6. Proof of household income (i.e., proof of the income of every individual who resides in my house).
7. Proof that I reside in the District of Columbia.

**V. Attestations and Signature**

1. The child(ren) has resided with me, on a continuous basis, for at least the most recent six months.

**2. Circle the one that applies**

The child's parent has not resided in my home for at least the most recent six continuous months.

Or

I am the child(ren)'s standby guardian and the child(ren)'s parent designated me to be the child(ren)'s standby guardian.

By signing this Application for Grandparent Caregivers Pilot Program Subsidy, I swear or attest that all of the information in this Application Is true and accurate to my best belief.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

District of Columbia:

I hereby certify on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ before me, the subscriber, a notary public, personally appeared \_\_\_\_\_, known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed on this Document and acknowledged that he/she executed the same for the purposes therein contained. In witness. Whereof, I have here unto set my hand and official seal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary's Signature

*Program Budget for Fiscal Year 2007*

**FY07 Budget (October 1, 2006 - September 30, 2007)**

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<u>EXPENSES</u>		<u>NOTES</u>
Contractor Wages	119,300.00	Includes money for a PT CPR/Clerical Assistant and a 3% cost of living increase.
Capital Expenses		
Computer Equipment	7,500.00	
Fax Machine	500.00	
<i>Subtotal - Capital Expenses</i>	<b>8,000.00</b>	
Office Supplies		
Fingerprint Cards (800 @ \$35 per card)	28,000.00	
Paper\Pens\Folders\Etc	2,000.00	
<i>Subtotal - Office Supplies</i>	<b>30,000.00</b>	
Office Space	5,500.00	Based on a rate \$34.45 per SF for 157 SF
Printing & Copying	6,000.00	
Translation Services	2,000.00	
Postage & Delivery	7,500.00	
Fair Hearing Expenses	2,500.00	
Outreach & Education		
Graphic Design	1,700.00	
Printing	8,000.00	
Workshops	4,000.00	
<i>Subtotal - Outreach &amp; Education</i>	<b>13,700.00</b>	
Totals	200,000.00	